

MUSIC IN THE HOME

CAPITAL IN LEAD AS MUSIC CENTER; MASQUE PROPOSED

J. MacB.

An unprecedented season of music is promised to Washington for the coming winter. To the stranger within our gates a resume of the plans of the many local organizations may prove of interest.

To the stranger—be he soldier or civilian—the musicians of the National Capital are preparing to extend an hospitable welcome, trusting that through their music and their art-spirit they may fill a need in the lives of many who are laboring here for the protection of our country. It is a personal and warm touch with the better things of our civic life that the musicians of Washington wish to offer, so that the seeker after such an environment may find it through them.

The list of professional concerts already numbers fifty. To this can be added the several concerts given by each of the many choral clubs during the season, these bringing soloists of importance. Aside from the concerts, however, it is in the rehearsals, in the general activities and intercourse of the clubs that the greatest enjoyment is offered.

It is rumored, too, that the new community Christmas Masque by Percy MacKaye, with music by Arthur Farwell, may be brought out in Washington. If this can be accomplished, as it undoubtedly should be, it will be a great forward step in the community achievements of the Capital of these United States.

"The Evergreen Tree" is the title of this Christmas Masque. It is designed as a form of celebration that will be practical from a community-singing standpoint and one that also, by its theme and treatment, is especially adapted for use in army camps.

"The Evergreen Tree" is a radical departure from the traditional masque. In this production the music

Why U. S. Troops Sing On Their Way to the Trenches



Paul Hyde Davies, opera star, now a member of the First Infantry of the Student Officers' Reserve Corps, at Fort Benjamin Harrison, leading his fellows in singing. All over the country in the

various cantonments and training stations, Uncle Sam's boys are being taught to sing.

dominates instead of being incidental. The central character is disclosed as no other than the Santa Claus of childhood, and the dramatic narrative emphasizes the vital child spirit of humanity and its power to overcome the opposing forces of hatred and autocracy.

This Christmas masque promises to be a solution of the problem that is facing many cities—that of furnishing a form of celebration which will unite the people of the city and the men of the training camps in an appropriate observation of Yuletide.

Another Christmas celebration in the making is the annual Christmas concert of the Motet Choral Society—a chorus of about 100 mixed voices under the direction of Otto Torney Simon. The purpose of the concert is to symbolize Christmas and Peace, and the Christmas chorales will be

sung around the lighted Christmas tree.

The program is in three parts—the Church, the People, and last the Child. The church will be represented by two motets, one of the Roman and one of the Greek church. Four Russian folk songs will typify the People, while for the Child will be given three choruses from "The Messiah," "A Rose in Blooming," by Prastorius, and as a close the solemn, lovely and simple "Holy Night."

And then there are the women's choruses. The Rubinstein Club under Mrs. A. M. Blair, with Claude Robeson at the piano, is already preparing its first program. This chorus of about 100 voices will sing the Liza Lehmann "Endymion," to the Longfellow poem, as the major number of this concert. Dorothy Johnson Baseler, harpist, is

the soloist and four choruses with harp accompaniment will be sung.

Recently installed in their new home, the Elizabeth Somers house at Eleventh and M streets northwest, the choral club of the Young Women's Christian Association sent a rally number of about 100 girls to the first rehearsal of the chorus under Mrs. Blair, with Miss Julia Huggins at the piano.

The camp idea seems to pervade the spirit of the Monday Morning Music Club—also a women's chorus—and under their new director, Herndon Mossell, plans are being made to give monthly concerts at the camps near Washington. Edgar Priest, director of the club last year, has given up this work to devote himself to Government service.

Out in the suburbs, at Takoma Park, the community spirit holds first place among the efforts along that line. Tomorrow evening the Community Singing Chorus of Takoma will meet for its first "sing," everybody being invited to come out and sing. This chorus is under the auspices of the Citizens' Association of the park, and the plan is to use old songs and patriotic songs, meeting for this recreation once each month until June, when a big outdoor affair is to be held, assisted by two local bands—that of the Seventh Day Adventists and one from the Bible School. That is the right community spirit—open for all, maintained by all.

For the inaugural evening, tomorrow, Dr. Hamlin Cogswell, director of music of the Washington public schools, will attend with a Washington community orchestra, of thirty-five members. Dr. Cogswell will direct, but the local leader is James Dyre. The soloists are Mrs. Ivy Herriott Shade, soprano, and Dr. A. O. Penny, baritone.

A "war chorus" has been formed. This is all for patriotic purposes—to instill spirit into the Liberty loan drives—to lend to music and cheer where national gatherings may need them.

Composed entirely of men, this chorus is under the direction of Otto Torney Simon, with George W. Davis as chairman of the organization. They issued a rally call for recruits on last Wednesday evening at the Y. M. C. A., promising "no dues and few rehearsals."

Children cannot very well choose their parents nor parents their children, but both can exercise considerable control over their musical environment.

It is certainly strange that some of the most sanitary homes have indecent rags called music littered all over their parlors.

TAFT MAKES PLEA FOR NEW NATIONAL ANTHEM FOR U. S.

Ex-President Taft, professor of international law at Yale, who was the chief speaker at the dinner of the Yale alumni of New Haven at Memorial hall, Yale University, in referring to "The Star-Spangled Banner" as our national anthem, made a plea for a new national anthem. He said:

"We are dealing with preparedness now, military, and so forth, and I am very much interested in 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' just sung, because if we are going to be prepared for war, we certainly need to be prepared with a proper national hymn. I presume my relation with the national anthem is a privileged one. I liked it well enough before I went to the Philippines. Of course I could not sing it all the way through, and did not know all the verses, but when we went to the Philippines we thought it necessary to instruct the Filipinos in the air of the national anthem.

"They played it on all occasions, and it was deemed necessary that everybody should stand up and take off his hat, in order that the Filipinos might learn good manners in that regard. The Filipinos love music and ceremony and with a great many bands playing it on every occasion—three or four bands, one starting right after the other—it grew to be a most trying situation and I became familiar with a discord brought about by the force of the tunes that the Filipinos were quite willing to bring home to us.

"Why can't we have an anthem that somebody can sing? Why can't we have one that does not remind us of the war of 1812, in which we did not particularly distinguish ourselves? Why can't we have something broader in scope? It seems to me we ought to have an anthem of our own. You know the song you have just sung was originally a German national anthem. Why should we not have the departments of music and English collaborate that we might have a proper national anthem? I suggest that as one branch of preparedness in which we might lead, as we are leading in our artillery regiment."—A. T. in Musical America.

Tommies Defy Shells To Try French Piano

Fresh evidences of the power of music to cheer the soldiers in the field are encountered frequently in the newspapers, and the London Times recently gave this account of the adventures of a piano in the present war:

The whole line was digging itself in. The Germans were shelling the position heavily and life itself depended upon digging in. The men worked feverishly, racing death.

Suddenly the trench tools of one party struck on wood. They had found a box—a large box—a very large box. On this site had stood, in the happy days now so long ago, a large chateau. What was this relic of the old world upon which the trench tools of the new had struck? Buried treasure? Yes. The wooden box grew larger and larger till it revealed itself as a grand piano.

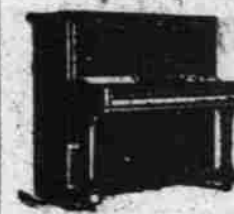
And immediately German shells or no, some one must needs try it. It was sorely battered, but it sounded. A grand piano which sounded was a prize which the British soldier—brutal mercenary of an unmusical people—was not going to sacrifice for all the shells in Europe. That piano must not be moved. The trench formation must be altered to make room for it, and altered it was. And, tenderly propped upon two logs of its own and a third built up of mud, the piano held the field.

A pianist was called for, and under the whistling and screaming and

crashing of the German shells, the piano sounded with it could be. The trenches all about were packed with soldiers. In vain the company officers warned them of snipers, insisted on their taking shelter beneath the parapet. Stand up and listen they would. And the company officers themselves were just as bad. In its pearly days the piano may have had its triumphs, its rapt audiences, in the calm of the chateau, but this was its apogee. And when the time came for the battalion to be relieved nothing would satisfy the men but the piano must go with them. Now, with a new third leg of wood, it dwells in honor in a safer, drier place somewhere behind the lines.

It is for this reason that we must have song in the training camps, time for the men to sing and pick men to lead them. Many of the army bands are concerned only in putting arms into the hands of the new American soldier and the knowledge of how to use them into his head. But this equipment is not sufficient. If we fail to give the soldier the great spiritual asset of song we have failed to provide him with that intangible equipment which wrings victory out of defeat and which feeds, as nothing else can, the hidden springs of loyalty and courage and determination.

If there were as many chamber music circles in our homes as there are bridge parties, what a generation of music lovers we should become!



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